



Town of Carlisle

MASSACHUSETTS 01741

Office of

PLANNING BOARD

P.O. BOX 729
CARLISLE, MA 01741
(508) 369-9702

**MINUTES: MEETING
JUNE 21, 1993
ROOM 2, SPALDING SCHOOL**

Planning Board Chair Ernstoff opened the meeting at 8:10. Present were Board members Yanofsky, Duscha, Colman, and Chaput. The Board, on a motion from Colman, seconded by Duscha, unanimously approved the Decision on the Application of Brian Hebb to Amend the Special Permits for Ice Pond: Conservation Cluster and Common Driveway, Date of Decision: June 7, 1993. The P. A. reported that there was no Ice Pond ANR to sign, nor had the Board received a revision to the road profile as expected. Minutes of June 7 were tabled. Bills were approved as presented.

Master Plan Discussion: At 8:15, Ernstoff opened the discussion on the Master Plan. Present then or later were:

Michael Benfield and Heather Pannell, Conscom
Phyllis Nei and Wanda Milik, Selectmen
Judie Post and Dorothea Kress, Council on Aging
Jim Davis, Historical Commission
Sarah Andreassen, Town Clerk
George Foote, former Planning Board member and LTCR committee
Davida Fox-Melanson, Superintendent, Carlisle Public Schools
Hal Sauer, 80 Russell Street Committee
Jonathan Granata, Town Building Committee
Liz Thibeault, Library Trustees

Ernstoff explained that the public had been invited by letter to the Mosquito, and all Boards, Committees and Staff had been invited directly. He explained further that the Board is hoping to involve as many people as possible in the next steps of the process, and that the agenda for that night was to determine together what those steps are. Participants were given copies of the Town Meeting presentation made by Board member Chaput, and Section 81-D of the Subdivision Control Law, which requires Towns to create Master Plans.

The participants were then asked to introduce themselves, identify the group they represent, and make any comments they wish. Planning Board member Evans also arrived. Phyllis Nei: Representing the Selectmen and the Council on Aging, she mentioned that the conflicts within the goals might continue to exist, but that we need to be responsible for Town growth and plan for the future anyway.

Judie Post: Representing Council on Aging, she mentioned that she was pleased to be involved, and commented that she has recently asked EOCD for help and been told essentially, "We need to see your master plan."

Hal Sauer: Representing 80 Russell St., but also a long term proponent of planning the Town's future, he commented that now that we have goals, we need to create the process by which they may be interpreted now and in the future. He suggested we review each goal in the context of present bylaws, and evaluate how to revise the bylaws to react to the goals. In addition, there are tasks implied in the goals, simply a list of things which need to be done; for example, preserving the Town Center might imply placing utility wires there underground.

Nei: First pick goals which seem consistently supported by townspeople, such as 2 acre zoning.

George Foote: Although a member of LTRC Committee, he is primarily interested as a recent Board member. He disagreed that 2 acre zoning is universally desired; he felt the impacts associated with 2 acre zoning may be desirable, but that 2 acre zoning per se may not be specifically important.

Jim Davis: Representing the Historical Commission, he commented that former attempts at Master Planning failed because they were presented as a whole unbreakable unit. He suggested we answer two questions: What do we want the Town to do? What do we want the Town not to do? He commented further that everyone is concerned about the lack of affordable housing, but several old homes have been demolished which would have been "affordable". Why not have a Demolition Bylaw which allows the Historic Commission and the Council on Aging to get a permit from the Board of Appeals to keep these homes? Tell the Town that the Master Plan is for the long-term, and that implementation will be accomplished in pieces, over time, and can be amended.

Mike Benfield: Representing Conscom, he commented that he was very pleased to be invited to this meeting, that Town Meeting had wanted the process to be more inclusive, and that he is personally committed to being part of the process.

Jane Anderson: Representing Board of Health, she commented that a Master Plan would certainly have an impact on the Board's area of concern.

Heather Pannell: Representing Conscom, she wants to be involved in protecting natural resources. She feels perhaps an evaluation of the goals should include the values implicit in each goal so that we are clear on what each goal aims at.

Wanda Milik: Representing Selectmen, she personally likes 2 acres.

Liz Thibeault: Representing the Library Trustees, she explained that, looking forward to the day when they have their entire building for library use, the trustees want to work in concert with the Town goals, particularly as the library has a prime location in Town Center.

Jonathan Granata: As a member of the the Town Building Committee is pleased to have been invited to participate. He suggested we might want to focus on a few goals.

Dorothea Kress: The Council on Aging is pleased that the goals show understanding of how many elderly there are in Town.

Sarah Andreassen: She was surprised at Town Meeting by the closeness of the vote. The fear of change is common, so don't move too fast.

David Fox-Melanson: The schools are delighted to be part of the process.

Sauer: Master Planning is not a process with an end; the process itself may be the point.

Benfield: He agrees the process is very important and needs to be done correctly.

Although perhaps in the past process has been cut short, we are doing it right now.

Foote: He felt Davis' comment was important to summarize. The process will generate a living, on-going plan; implementation will evolve as we proceed. Don't present the plan as a fait accompli; let people know we will implement it on a piece meal basis.

Davis: Get state lawyers involved.

Ernstoff: Does anyone have an idea why the public is not here?

General response: Letter to Mosquito was not enough visibility. Get more information into the paper with more emphasis on the importance of the process.

Milik: People misunderstand meaning of Master Plan. They think a Master Plan is a zoning district plan and figure we've already done that.

Post: People don't know what the process is. It may be overwhelming to contemplate it, and may deter people.

Sauer: It will be hard to motivate many people unless there is a crisis. Help keep interest alive by moving in quick, short steps, critiquing ideas as we go in small groups. He liked the Planning Day and felt we should do another.

Benfield: Planning Day was excellent. We should really publicize our process as we did then. Make sure people know that there is no chance of Carlisle staying the way it is unless we do plan.

Davis: The general populace would be bored by an organizational meeting. Pick a few major goals and concentrate on them, evaluating how these are affected by all existing rules and bylaws.

Pannell: Publicize the agenda for each meeting by describing the subject area; at that meeting, begin to break down each goal in that subject area.

Chaput: Are you suggesting subcommittees? (Several nods of agreement.)

Pannell: Many goals which seem to be exclusive of all others actually overlap.

Foote: If we break down too much into subcommittees, we run the risk of forgetting the need to resolve the conflicts. Planning Days, which would attempt to resolve conflicts and forge consensus on implementation, must be very limited in number because we have finite resources.

Anderson: Are we, the citizens, implementers, or are we reviewers of proposed implementations suggested by committees which we review for conformance with the goals?

Chaput: Nothing gets implemented without Town Meeting approval; we are facilitators.

Andreassen: Remember change is scary to people. They come to Carlisle for certain reasons, and then they perceive we are trying to change what they came here to achieve.

Granata: Have you communicated with other towns of similar size?

Pannell: Carlisle is not just a town of a certain small size. It is also a town surrounded by towns which are much more developed, which puts certain pressures on us. It may be hard to find a comparable town.

Granata: I was suggesting we compare process, not demographics.

Foote: Carlisle decided not to hire a professional planning consultant to come in and do a Master Plan, but we have looked at many towns for process and content.

Chaput: We want a plan which will be used, not one to leave on a shelf.

Granata: Could we have small neighborhood meetings to facilitate the process?

Post: If we have subcommittees, how will we decide their charge?

Pannell: Recommended a mediation service to help us decide how to elicit feedback from the community.

Davis: Let's organize more before we publicize much more. Don't preconceive conclusions in titles of discussions; keep subjects broad.

Yanofsky: I see consensus developing for subcommittees.

Ernstoff: If we do publicize meetings organized around a single subject, we could allow the participants to decide their own process.

Foote: The Board must break down the mass of the goals document into manageable segments based on the first 15 goals. The Board should provide the structure.

Thibeault: The Board must define the effort; the committee can't do that. Other participants will pop in and out, but the Board must provide long-term structure. The public may not be interested in the organizational part.

Ernstoff: We'll send out minutes of all meetings, and provide leadership and organization. Some goals, like one and two, appear universally desired, but what do they mean? Our next meeting's focus could be: what do these two mean and what other goals group well with them?

Pannell: Because people may agree on "apple-pie" goals like one and two for different reasons, the sub-set goals may not be agreeable to them. Committees are not a good idea.

Foote: The general feeling seems to be that the next step is to create more specific goals statements. If we are discussing specific goals, put the conflicting goals into the same group to force a more detailed understanding of what these goals mean.

Nei: Could we pose provocative questions in articles about each subject to attract interest?

Post: We need to move forward so we can compete with other towns for funds. Can we try to describe the size and shape of the elephant we are dealing with rather than cause controversy with sensational questions?

Sauer: How do we get from goal to implementation? We should look at all sub-goals, all implications of possible implementations, and in general, break down goals into understandable pieces.

Nei: I suggest Planning Board group goals and propose these to the group which attends the next meeting.

Davis: This is a moving elephant! To use a military analogy, make sure the gun for which we are writing specs can also shoot. We need concepts more than specifics, because by the time we get to implement, some of the specifics may be obsolete.

Ernstoff: I hear you charging us with organizing and grouping goals for the next meeting. We can decide later whether to use subcommittees or not; that decision may evolve from the grouping process. We will also produce better P. R. and a report of this meeting for the press, and will send minutes to all groups.

Evans: When we've defined goals better, the process will begin to appear more clearly to us.

Ernstoff: Please list three conflicts or three areas of agreement which you see and send to the P.A. Our next meeting will be at 8:15 on July 26 in the meeting room at Carlisle Education Center, 872 Westford Rd., new home of the Planning Board, Conscom, and Council on Aging.

The general meeting was adjourned at this time.

Post will bring an EOCD form to us so we can help answer questions regarding the human services aspect of the goals.

The Board discussed its next steps regarding the Master Plan. It was agreed that a series of articles should be offered to the Mosquito, including ones on Chapter 81-D, Chaput's Town Meeting presentation, history of change in Carlisle's recent years, and predictions for the future with good planning in place. It was agreed that our goal is to educate and interest the public, but not necessarily to get a large number of people to the next few work meetings; that attendance level would be ideal for a fall planning day. People may become involved when it is pointed out how Carlisle has changed in the last 15 years, and they are asked whether they want to be part of planning the for the next 15. Change is inevitable. Perhaps other Boards' members will write their versions of why we need a Master Plan for the purpose of publication as well. The P. A. will try to get a commitment from the Mosquito to save us space every issue for something about the process, even if it is only an announcement of meetings. The first submission will be the draft minutes of tonight's meeting; the second will be an article by Duscha on recent changes.

For the next meeting, we will have grouped the top goals.

The Board agreed we need to start preparing for the fall planning day now; there was disagreement on whether we need outside help to organize and run it. Evans felt that the lack of consensus experienced last year will lessen as we become more focused.

The Board grouped the top 20 goals under four headings: rurality, community, education, and safety; these will be discussed at the next meeting, and the participants "homework assignment" will feed into that discussion. We then can begin to explore and define those categories, finding the values behind them, seeing if we are missing any pieces. These categories will be on the board as people come into the meeting.

We will try to get an announcement into the paper regarding the agenda for the meeting of the 26th; the Mosquito will not be publishing on the 23rd, so we must get it to them early on the 13th for publication on the 16th.

It was agreed that once we have the four categories defined and refined, implementation strategies and priorities can begin to form, and that subcommittees could be used to do specific tasks, such as surveying the public or research, but not to make decisions. It was suggested that participants be given some such tasks on the 26th, and that they be asked to look for other commonalities or conflicts in our categories. Last, it was agreed that economic impact is an issue to be considered eventually for every implementation strategy, but that it is not appropriate at this stage.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02.


Sandy Bayne, Planner Assistant